The Perpetuity of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

A

SERMON

Preached in the

High Church of *Edinburgh*,

MONDAY *January* 3*d*, 1737;

Upon Occaſion of the Anniverſary Meeting of the SOCIETY in *Scotland*, *for propagating* CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

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The Perpetuity of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

SERMON on Psal. lxxii. 17.

His Name ſhall endure for ever: His Name ſhall be continued as long as the Sun: And Men ſhall be bleſſed in him: All Nations ſhall call him bleſſed.

THIS Pſalm, in which the Words now read before you do lie, doth evidently diſcover itſelf, by the Tenor of it, and likewiſe by the Title prefixed to it, to have a particular Reſpect unto *Solomon*, and to the Happineſs of his peaceful and auſpicious Reign. But there are ſeveral Paſſages in this Pſalm, in which the inſpir'd Penman doth ſoar ſo very high above the Type in *Solomon*, that they cannot, in any tolerable Senſe, be looked upon as applicable unto him,

or as having had their Accompliſhment in him; whereas they are obviouſly applicable unto the great and glorious Antitype, the promiſed Meſſias, our bleſſed Redeemer *the Lord Jeſus*. Such is that Paſſage in the 5th Verſe of the Pſalm, *They ſhall fear thee as long as the Sun and Moon endure, throughout all Generations:* Such alſo is that in the 7th Verſe, *In his Days ſhall the Righteous flouriſh, and abundance of Peace, ſo long as the Moon endureth:* But eſpecially that of our Text, in the 17th Verſe, *His Name ſhall endure for ever: His Name ſhall be continued as long as the Sun: And Men ſhall be bleſſed in him: All Nations ſhall call him bleſſed.* I deſign therefore, as GOD ſhall pleaſe to give Aſſiſtance, to conſider theſe Words now, as eminently relative to our bleſſed Redeemer.

There are ſeveral Things of great Importance, to be taken Notice of by us in them: 1*ſt*, We have ſomewhat concerning the Perpetuity of his great and glorious Name, *His Name ſhall endure for ever: His Name ſhall be continued as long as the Sun.* 2*dly*, We have the Happineſs which the Children of Men ſhall attain unto by him, *And Men ſhall be bleſſed in him.* 3*dly*, We have the grateful Acknowledgements that ſhall be made unto him, *All Nations ſhall call him bleſſed.* Now I would endeavour to ſpeak ſomewhat upon each of theſe, and then ſubjoin ſome Improvements upon the Subject.

As to the *firſt* of theſe, I would firſt conſider what we are to underſtand by his *Name*, and then open up the Expreſſions relative to it.

1*ſt*, Then by his *Name* we may underſtand *himſelf*; as when we ſpeak of one's *Name* as famous, we mean the *Perſon himſelf* is famous, and is held in Remembrance. In like Manner, when the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of our bleſſed Redeemer, *Philip.* ii. 9. doth obſerve, that GOD hath given him *a Name which is above every Name*, in that great Authority and Dignity to which he hath advanced him; he addeth, that at the *Name of Jeſus* every Knee ſhould bow; that is, that every Perſon may be excited and encouraged to reverence and ſerve, and pay their Homage unto *him whoſe Name is Jeſus*. And this you will obſerve to be quite a different Thing, from that *Popiſh* and *ſuperſtitious* Cuſtom (falſly founded by ſome upon this *Paſſage*) of bowing the Body at the pronouncing of the very Syllables of the Word *Jeſus*.

2*dly*, By his *Name* we may underſtand *his glorious Excellencies and Endowments*; for, by theſe, as by a *Name*, is he made known unto us; and ſeveral of theſe doth the Prophet *Iſaiah* point out to us, in a very beautiful, lofty and magnificent Strain, ſaying, *Iſa.* ix. 6. *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and his Name ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſeller, the mighty*

mighty GOD, the everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace.

3*dly*, By his *Name* we may underſtand *his Religion*; the true, the holy, *the Chriſtian Religion*; of which he is the great Author and Foundation; and by which, he, his glorious Perfections and Qualifications, his wonderful Performances for us, and gracious Deſigns toward us, are in ſuch a Manner manifeſted to us, that we may well know him as it were by *Name*, and may be able to diſtinguiſh him from every other Perſon.

4*thly*, By his *Name* we may underſtand his *Kingdom and Government*; for, by this alſo, as by a *Name*, is he made known unto us; and by the Holineſs, the Juſtice, the Equity, and Benignity of his *Adminiſtration*, is his *Name* highly honoured, and he himſelf greatly renowned.

And now, as to the Expreſſions in the Text relative to this his *Name*, ye may obſerve there are two; *His Name ſhall endure for ever*; *His Name ſhall be continued as long as the Sun.*

The firſt of theſe doth point out ſeveral Things unto us; as 1*ſt*, that *he himſelf* ſhall live for ever; for tho' he *was dead*, and did die for our *Sins*, according to the Scriptures; yet, according alſo to the Scriptures, *He roſe from the Dead, is now alive, and lives for ever more.* (a)

2*dly*, The Expreſſion, *His Name ſhall endure for ever*, doth intimate, that all his various Excellences

(a) *Rev.* i. 18.

cellencies and Enduements ſhall remain with him for ever. He will ſtill continue to be *the Brightneſs of the Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon* (*a*). He will ſtill be poſſeſt of the ſame Wiſdom and Power and Goodneſs, for the maintaining of his People's Happineſs, that he had in the purchaſing of it for them.

3*dly*, It points at the Perpetuity of his *Religion*, as a *Religion* that ſhall be found to be in ſeveral Reſpects, *an everlaſting Religion*. Hence it is, we read of the *everlaſting Goſpel* (*b*), a Goſpel and Religion that ſhall endure for ever; as eminently calculated, not only for the State of the Saints of God here upon Earth, but alſo for their Condition when they get into Heaven. For as it preſcribeth *Repentance* and *Faith*, and *Hope* and *Holineſs* for the Saints of GOD, while they are here below; ſo it aſſures us, that in Heaven above, the Griefs and Sorrows of *Repentance* ſhall be for ever ſuperſeded, *Faith* ſhall be changed into Viſion, and *Hope* into Fruition; but, that *Holineſs* ſhall be for ever continued there, and that in its very higheſt Perfection.

4*thly*, The Expreſſion points at the Perpetuity of his *Kingdom and Government*. Accordingly we are told, *Iſa.* ix. 7. *Of the Increaſe of his Government and Peace there ſhall be no End*; and *Heb.* i. 8. to the Son its ſaid, *Thy Throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever.*

5*thly*, It

(*a*) *Heb.* i. 3. (*b*) *Rev.* xiv. 6.

5thly, It implies, there ſhall always be ſome to preſerve among them the Honour of his *Name*, and to pay the Homage that is due to ſo great, ſo glorious, ſo renowned a Perſon. Saints on Earth, and Saints in Heaven, yea the glorious Angels of Heaven, ſhall all concur in thus maintaining for ever the Honour due unto his *Name*; therefore, as it is ſaid unto the Church, the whole Body of the Saints, *Pſal.* xlv. 11. *He is thy Lord, worſhip thou him*; ſo its ſaid unto the Angels, *Heb.* i. 6. *Let all the Angels of God worſhip him.*

And now as to the ſecond Expreſſion relative to the Perpetuity of his *Name*, *His Name ſhall be continued as long as the Sun*; there are theſe following Things I would ſuggeſt unto you; 1*ſt*, Tho', as the Apoſtle *Peter* aſſures us, 2 Epiſt. iii. *Chap.* 10 and 11 *Verſes*, that, at the laſt Day, *The Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great Noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat, the Earth alſo, and the Works that are therein ſhall be burnt up*; *and, that all theſe Things ſhall be diſſolved*; that glorious Luminary, the *Sun* in the Firmament not excepted; yet, we are by no Means to look upon this Expreſſion in the Text, in which the Pſalmiſt tells us, *Chriſt's Name ſhall be continued as long as the Sun*, to be a Limitation of the former Expreſſion, which we have opened up unto you as ſo very extenſive and ſtrong, *His Name ſhall endure for ever*; but rather, the latter Expreſſion in the

Text

Text is to be look'd upon as a just and native Inference, obviously deducible from the former; it being plain, that seeing his *Name is to endure for ever*, even for ever and ever, throughout all the endless Ages of Eternity; it will no doubt *be continued as long as the Sun*, even unto the End of Time.

And yet 2*dly*, This Inference that is so just and obvious, is not to be therefore looked upon as superfluous and needless. If Matters are well considered, there is nothing so, in all the blessed Scriptures of Truth. There is still a good Reason, even for these very Repetitions, which one would be ready to think might well be spared; whatever ignorant and prejudiced Minds may be apt sometimes to imagine unto the contrary. And there is very good Reason in particular here, for the second as well as for the first Expression; For,

1*st*, This Inference in the second Expression is made to suggest unto us, what doth in a very peculiar Manner concern us; namely, that not only shall the Honour of the Redeemer's *Name*, be ever, somewhere or another maintain'd, either in Heaven or in Earth; but in particular, that it shall still in some considerable Measure be maintain'd even upon Earth, throughout all succeeding Generations; as long as the Sun itself shall continue to shine upon the Earth, and the Inhabitants of it.

However, 2*dly*, It ſeems alſo to ſuggeſt unto us, That the Honour of his *Name* upon Earth, and the State of his holy *Religion* there, will indeed be variable as the *Sun*, which ſometimes is under Cloud and ſhineth but faintly, at other Times ſhineth brightly and very extenſively; as in like Manner, the Glory of our Redeemer's *Name*, and the Honour of his *Kingdom*, is ſometimes leſs and ſometimes more conſpicuous; ſometimes confin'd within a narrower Compaſs, and ſometimes more extenſive and glorious.

3*dly*, In that it is ſaid, *His Name ſhall be continued as long as the Sun*, and that his *Name*, as ye have heard, doth among other Things, point at *his holy Religion and Kingdom*; this intimateth to us, that in Proportion to the Regard and Honour that is paid among Men unto *him* and to his *Name*, ſuch always will the Succeſs be of his *holy Religion*, and ſuch the Proſperity of his *Kingdom*, even as long as the *Sun doth endure*; and conſequently, that the leſs of Regard is at any Time paid to *him* and to his *Name*, the more will his *holy Religion* be loſing Ground, and be upon the Decline.

I now proceed to the ſecond general Thing in the Text, the Happineſs which the Children of Men ſhall attain unto by our Redeemer, *Men ſhall be bleſſed in him*. The Word *Men* is not indeed in the Original, but is very fitly, and agreeably to the Text and Context, ſupplied by

by the Tranſlators; and by this are we to underſtand *the Children of Men*, of both Sexes; ſome of all Sorts, and of *all Nations*, as the Expreſſion is in the following Clauſe. Of theſe we are told, not only that they ſhall be *bleſſed*, but that they ſhall be *bleſſed in him*; whereby is intimated unto us, *1ſt*, That it is only for his Sake, and upon his Account that we can expect to be *bleſſed*. He only is the *Beloved*, in whom we are to be *accepted*, as the Apoſtle teacheth us, *Eph.* i. 6. *2dly*, That our being in *Chriſt*, or by a true and ſincere Faith united to him, is in ſome reſpects the great Foundation of our Bleſſedneſs. *3dly*, That all ſuch as are thus *in him*, ſhall moſt ſurely be *bleſſed in him*, and together with him.

But now, it will be fit to enquire a little, how it is, or with what, *Men* may expect to be *bleſſed in him*; and this indeed opens a Field of a very large Extent; for the Bleſſings to be had in him, are exceeding many, and various and great. However, I ſhall only touch a little upon ſome of them. And,

Firſt, *Men ſhall be bleſſed in him*, even as to the Bleſſings of the preſent Life; in as far as theſe are really fit for them, and needful to carry on the Work of God and of our Redeemer by them. And when ſuch as are in *Chriſt*, have any even of the common Bleſſings of Life beſtowed upon them, they are beſtowed in a diſtinguiſhing Manner, and are accompanied with

a distinguishing Blessing, as Tokens of Love, and Pledges of greater and better Things in reserve for them. And indeed, the Apostle's Reasoning in so strong a Manner as he doth, *Rom.* viii. 32. to the raising of our Hopes in *Christ* even as to the greatest Things; doth equally serve to encourage our Expectations as to these lower Things, as far as they shall really be proper for us; for says he, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things?*

But 2*dly*, However it fare with these that are in *Christ* as to the common Blessings, the Riches, the Honours and Prosperities of the present Life; they shall surely be *blessed in him*, with the most valuable and durable *Riches*; for says the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* viii. 9. *Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your Sakes he became poor, that ye through his Poverty might be rich*; rich *towards God*, rich in *Grace*, rich in *Faith*, rich in *good Works*, and rich in a sure Title unto the *heavenly Inheritance*.

3*dly*, *Men shall be blest in him*, with that great and fundamental Blessing, the Pardon of their Iniquities; for as the Apostle hath it, *Rom.* viii. 1. *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ.*

4*thly*, They shall be *blest in him* with sanctifying and renewing Grace; for as ye have it, 2 *Cor.* v. 17. *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new*

new Creature; the Workmanship of GOD created in Christ Jesus to good Works, as the Apostle also speaketh, *Eph.* ii. 10.

5*thly*, *Men shall be blest in him* with *Peace*; for, says the Apostle, *Eph.* ii. 14. *He is our Peace.* Indeed, even these that are in *Christ*, and are in a peculiar Manner dear unto him, do not always enjoy *Peace* with Men. On the contrary, oftentimes have they too just Reason to lament and say as the blessed Psalmist, *Psal.* cxx. 5, 6. *Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar: My Soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth Peace*; but yet in *Christ*, they shall be sure of the best and most valuable *Peace. Jo.* 16. ult. *In the World ye shall have Tribulation*, but *in me ye shall have Peace.* His Saints shall in him and through him, have *Peace* with God and *Peace* with their own Consciences; they shall have that *Peace*, which the Apostle speaks of, *Phil.* iv. 7. as *the Peace of God that passeth all Understanding*, and doth, with a truly blissful and delightful Serenity, *keep the Heart and Mind in Christ Jesus.* In a Word,

6*thly*, *Men shall be blessed in him* with *all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places*; for so the Apostle expresly sheweth us, *Eph.* i. 3. And, as these spiritual Blessings are in a very peculiar Manner valuable in themselves; so, in the Consequences of them they are eternal Blessings; intended, by an infinitely wise and gracious GOD, to wean us from the Things of a

present

preſent World, in which it is impoſſible we can ever find our *Happineſs*; and to fit us for theſe *heavenly Places*, theſe *many Manſions in our Father's Houſe* above, where the Happineſs will be fully commenſurate to the Purity of our perfectly ſanctified Natures, and accompanied with the moſt refined and raviſhing Joys, never more to be interrupted, and never at any Time to be ended. And what is it we would wiſh for more?

And now I come to the *third* and laſt general Thing in the Text, the grateful Acknowledgments that are to be made to our Redeemer; *all Nations ſhall call him bleſſed.* As to this, there are theſe following Things I would lay before you.

1. To *call him bleſſed* implies the acknowledging of him to be *bleſſed.* And indeed good Reaſon is there to do ſo, yea to acknowledge him to be *moſt bleſſed for ever*, and that with the higheſt Degree of Admiration, upon many Accounts. How bleſt and truly happy a Perſon muſt he be, on the Account of his own original Excellencies? on the Account of the great Honour conferred by the Father upon him, as our Mediator, and as the Reward of his meritorious Obedience and Sufferings? and on the Account of the innumerable and ineſtimable Bleſſings, he hath purchaſed for us, is continually beſtowing on us, and is hereafter yet more fully to communicate to us? 2*dly*, To

call

call him bleſſed, is not only to acknowledge him ſuch, but to do ſo with our moſt thankful Praiſes; being ready to ſay, unto the Honour of his *Name*, and with a becoming Warmth of Devotion, as ye have it, *Rev.* v. 12. *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive Power and Riches, and Wiſdom and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Bleſſing.*

3*dly*, Whereas it is ſaid, *all Nations ſhall bleſs him*, this is to intimate, how univerſally Men ſhall be imployed in thus honouring of him. And indeed, it is very amazing, and a great Proof of the Divine Original and Authority of our holy *Religion*, to conſider how very ſpeedily, in the Courſe of a very few Years, after our Saviour's Death and Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion, the greateſt Honour was paid unto our Redeemer's *Name*, and his holy *Religion* made to overſpread all the numerous Nations, Provinces, and extenſive Dominions of that vaſtly extended Empire, the *Roman* Empire; and that in Oppoſition to all the Power and Policy of the Princes of the World, to all the Subtilty of the pretended wiſe Men of the World, and to all the Enmity and Rage of many of the inferior Sort againſt it; and all this, without any external Force, or Sophiſtry of deſigning Men to propagate it; and only thro' the Countenance of Heaven upon it, and the ſpecial Bleſſing of GOD, upon the mean and contemptible Inſtruments, whom he honoured to be imployed in it.

And

And as the Honour of our Redeemer's *Name* was remarkably advanced in the primitive Times of his holy *Religion*; ſo hath it ever ſince that Time, even until now, been in leſs or more maintained among the Nations. And what a great and goodly Company ſhall there be imployed in the doing of this for ever, when *the whole Family of Heaven and Earth ſhall be gathered together*, and when, as ye have it, *Rev.* xxi. 24. *all the Nations of them that are ſaved*, ſhall be made to enter into the new *Jeruſalem*, there to ſing and ſay, as it is, *Rev.* v. 9, 10. *Thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred and Tongue, and People, and Nation, and haſt made us unto our God Kings and Prieſts.*

And now, having thus opened up unto you that great Variety of Matter, which lieth crowded in this inſtructive and comfortable Te[illegible], I proceed, as was propoſed in the ſecond Place, to the Improvements upon the Subject. And

1*ſt*, Is there ſuch particular Notice taken, by the holy Spirit of GOD, in the Words of our Text, as to the bleſſed and glorious *Name* of our Redeemer; and, doth the Succeſs of our holy *Religion* depend ſo much, as ye have heard, upon the Regard that Men do pay to our bleſſed Redeemer, and to the Honour of his *Name*; then, this may ſpeak out abundant Direction to us that are Miniſters, and to others who profeſs themſelves to be Chriſtians.

1. To

1. To us who are Miniſters; that in all our publick Miniſtrations, we ſhould ſincerely endeavour to promote the Honour of his *Name*; not only by preaching directly and expreſly concerning *him*, from Time to Time as there is occaſion; but, by ſo managing our other Diſcourſes upon the Subjects of *Morality* and Practice, as it may appear we act our Part herein *as truly Chriſtian Miniſters*, reaſoning with our Hearers, upon truly Chriſtian Principles and Conſiderations.

No doubt, to cry out againſt, and run down all Sermons recommending Morality, or the practical Part of Religion, as inconſiſtent with the Spirit and Deſign of the *Goſpel*; doth diſcover, either a great deal of Ignorance, or of real Enmity againſt that which our bleſſed Saviour had in a ſpecial Manner, in his Intention, even in laying down of his Life for us; for the Apoſtle expreſly tells us, *Tit.* ii. 14. *Chriſt gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.*

But then, upon the other Hand, it muſt be acknowledged, when Miniſters are ſo continually upon the Duties of *Morality*, as very rarely, or very ſuperficially, if at all, to ſpeak of *Chriſt*, the great Author of our Religion: Or, when Miniſters preach up the Duties of *Morality*, without inculcating the Neceſſity of *Regeneration*, of a *vital Union* through Faith unto *Chriſt* the Re-

deemer, of the *Aids* of the Spirit and Grace of GOD: Or, when they preach up *Morality*, as if it were ſufficiently in our own Power to perform the Duties of it, in a truly gracious and acceptable Manner; or, as if our *Morality*, even with all the Imperfections that attend it, was enough alone to denominate us truly good and religious, and to make us happy: Or, to urge the Practice of *Morality*, without a ſuitable Regard to theſe *Motives* that are peculiar to, and are the diſtinguiſhing Excellency of the *Goſpel-revelation:* Such a Way of *Preaching*, hath a moſt obvious Tendency, to carry both the Preacher and the Hearer quite from off the *Chriſtian Scheme*. And I remember it to have been very juſtly obſerved of ſome, that *ſuch a Way of it*, which hath of late Years become ſo very faſhionable, and hath been ſo much applauded of many in the neighbouring Nation, hath, among other Things, exceedingly contributed to the Increaſe of *Deiſm* there; and ſo much the more Reaſon have we to take Care, that the dreadful Infection do not prevail among ourſelves.

And, in the *ſecond* Place, what I have now been ſuggeſting, may be ſome Way likewiſe of Uſe as to the Conduct even of others, (beſides Miniſters) that are profeſſed *Chriſtians*. Whenever theſe think of improving their Opportunities, for recommending of what is good, or of any Thing of *Religion*, to their Friends, their Neighbours, or Acquaintances; let them endea-

vour,

your, not merely to make them *good Perſons*, but truly *good and religious Chriſtians*; for there is no ſuch *true Goodneſs*, no *Goodneſs* ſo uniform and conſtant, as that which is grafted upon, or is the genuine Product of *truly Chriſtian Principles*.

A ſecond Improvement I would offer unto you upon the Subject, is this; Is it ſo, that the *Name* of the Redeemer *ſhall endure for ever*, and that it *ſhall be continued as long as the Sun*; how may this raiſe our Hopes and comfort us, amidſt all our Fears in Reference to the Honour of the Redeemer's *Name*, and the Intereſts of his holy *Religion?* It is true indeed, when we conſider what a Deluge of *Errors*, even of the groſſeſt Kind, hath, of late Years broke out in this Iſland, by *Socinians*, *Arians*, *Deiſts*, and other Infidels; when we conſider, to what an amazing Height Impiety and Immorality hath advanced among us; how very much a wretched Indifferency as to the real Concerns of *Religion* hath prevailed with us, yea with theſe of whom better Things might have been expected, as having enjoyed the Advantages of a good and religious Education themſelves; who yet, inſtead of ſtemming the Tide of Corruption, and ſtanding in the Gap to prevent its overflowing, have ſuffered themſelves to be carried down the Stream, and that by the Levity, the Pride, the Vanity, the Luxury, the many dangerous, hurtful *Amuſements and Diverſions*, which have now come to an extraor-

dinary Height among us; (not to ſpeak of various other Extravagancies of many of the younger Sort) which it was the Duty, and would have been the Honour of theſe who were elder, to have teſtified againſt, and to have, with a ſuitable Vigour, endeavoured to curb: In a Word, when we conſider how ſadly verified among us is the mournful Prediction of our Redeemer, *Matth.* xxiv. 12, that *Iniquity ſhall abound, and the Love of many ſhall wax cold:* Great Reaſon have we, on theſe and ſuch like Accounts, to cry out in the Words of the Prophet *Amos*, vii. 2. *O LORD GOD, I beſeech thee, by whom ſhall Jacob ariſe? for he is ſmall:* And to ſay with holy *David*, *Pſal.* xii. 1, 2. *Help Lord, for the godly Man ceaſeth, the faithful fail from among the Children of Men: They ſpeak Vanity, every one with his Neighbour*: So that our preſent Situation doth, in many Reſpects, look with a very threatning Aſpect upon the Concerns of *Religion*, and giveth too much Ground to fear, leſt the *Chriſtian Name* and *Religion*, be, in Proceſs of Time, quite worn out from among us. But here is our Comfort, he to whom it is *impoſſible to lie*, and to whom it can never be a Difficulty to perform what he ſaith, hath given his faithful Word of Promiſe for it, that his Son's *Name*, and conſequently his holy *Religion*, ſhall *endure for ever, and ſhall be continued as long as the Sun.*

'Tis

'Tis true indeed, that this his Promiſe, gracious and comfortable as it is, gives no Aſſurance to us, that his *Name and Religion* ſhall be always continued in particular with us. Many Churches that once have been famous, are now in their Ruins; and what hath befallen them, may ſoon and juſtly be made to befall ourſelves. However, there are theſe Things that even in this mournful View of the Matter, I would lay before you;

1*ſt*, All ſuch as are truly the Diſciples of the bleſſed JESUS, and have a true Zeal and Affection for the Honour of his *Name*, will be glad and rejoice at the Thoughts of this, that *he ſhall never want a Seed upon Earth*, ſomewhere or other, to ſerve him, to honour him, and that ſhall be *accounted unto him for a Generation* (a). And this much at leaſt, is plainly made ſure unto us by the Promiſe.

2*dly*, The more Danger we ſee the Intereſts of his *Religion and Kingdom* to be in, the more it will be the Care of all that are indeed his Friends, to do what they can, in a regular and becoming Manner, to prevent the Ruin of them.

3*dly*, The leſs there is of Succeſs in any ſuitable Endeavours for the Honour of the Redeemer's *Name*, the more will it be the ſincere Reſolution of all that truly love him, and regard him, ever to abide by him themſelves, and to keep cloſs unto his Intereſts, ſaying with good

(a) Pſa. 22. 30.

good *Joſhua*, (as far as they can, whatever may be the Way of others,) *As for me and my Houſe we will ſerve the* LORD, Joſh. xxiv. 15.

4*thly*, For as low as the Intereſts of *Religion* are among us, yet there are a good many, who have a ſincere Concern of Heart about them; ſo that there is good Ground to hope, GOD ſtill hath a Remnant among us, who will take Care, to keep up the Honour of *his Name*, and of his *Son's Name*, while they themſelves are alive; and to engage others to do the ſame, after they themſelves are gone and laid in the ſilent Grave. And no Doubt it concerneth us not to *deſpiſe the Day of ſmall Things* (a).

A third Improvement I offer upon the Subject is this; May the Children of Men be *bleſt* in our Redeemer, and ſo greatly *bleſt* as ye have heard, thro' the Knowledge of his *Name*, and a ſuitable Compliance with his holy *Religion*; how much ſhould this engage all Sorts of Perſons, according to their ſeveral Stations and Abilities, to hold Hand to the propagating the Knowledge of his *Name*, and to the recommending effectually the Love and Practice of his holy *Religion*. Let us therefore vigorouſly apply our ſelves unto it;

1*ſt*, By being much and fervent in Prayer unto GOD about it;

2*dly*, By being our ſelves good Examples in the Way of it;

3*dly*,

(a) Zech. iv. 10

3*dly*, By taking Care as we have Access, that they be proper Persons who are entrusted with teaching the *Christian Doctrines*, whether by publick Preaching or more private Instructions. *These Things commit thou to faithful Men*, says the Apostle, 2 Tim. ii. 2. And no Doubt, all that have any Power or Authority, or Influence, in the choosing, calling, or fixing of *Ministers* and other *Teachers* (a) of the Things of *Religion*, in particular Places, ought seriously to consider, how great a *Trust* is in Providence committed to them; and how awful an Account will one Day be required of them. And seeing 'tis obvious, a great Deal of the Honour of our Redeemer's *Name*, and of the Credit and Success of *Religion*, doth depend upon choosing and acting well in this Matter; the more there is of a Tentation in the Way of any to do otherwise, the more Need have they to be upon their Guard. And such as are under particular Attachments unto others, *by Relation or Friendship*; *or Dependence*, on the Account of Favours received or Favours expected, or on the Account of Losses and Inconveniencies that may be dreaded; should no Doubt take the more especial Heed unto themselves, lest extrinsick Considerations give the *Bias*, without suffering them to act sincerely upon the true *Motives*

(a) *Such as Probationers, or Candidates for the Ministry; itinerant Preachers, Catechists, also, Schoolmasters imployed by the Society.*

Motives of advancing the Honour of the Redeemer's *Name*, and the true Intereſts of his *Kingdom*.

4*thly*, If ye would hold Hand to the Honour of the Redeemer's *Name and Religion*, take Care to maintain a ſuitable Regard to theſe *Inſtitutions* he himſelf hath preſcribed for that Effect; as particularly,

1*ſt*, Make Conſcience of reading and meditating upon the bleſſed *Scriptures* of Truth. Let not the prevailing Taſte of this degenerate Age, to which theſe holy Oracles are become inſipid, take Place with you. 'Tis our Saviour's own Advice, *John* v. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for* ſays he, *they are they that teſtify of me*; and ſays the Apoſtle, *Col.* iii. 16. *Let the Word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all Wiſdom*;

2*dly*, Take Care to attend upon the *Ordinances* of his Houſe, particularly upon the *preaching* of his Word. *It hath pleaſed GOD*, ſays the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* i. 21. *by the Fooliſhneſs of Preaching, to ſave them that believe*; that is, by what the Men of the World are apt to account *Fooliſhneſs*. And *forſake not* ye *the aſſembling of your ſelves together, as the Manner of ſome is*, ſays the Apoſtle (*a*). Let not any ſay, I am of *Paul*, and I of *Apollos*, and I of *Cephas: Is Chriſt divided?* ſays the Apoſtle (*b*). Learn to look above the Inſtruments to *Chriſt* himſelf the *great Maſter of Aſſemblies* (c). This is in

(*a*) *Heb.* xo. 25. (*b*) 1 *Cor.* i. 12, 13. (c) Eccleſ. 12. 11.

in a particular Manner the way to honour *him*, and to contribute the more to the Success of his holy *Religion*.

3*dly*, Let me in a special Manner recommend to you, a high Regard to these *Christian Institutions*, the blessed Sacraments of *Baptism*, and the *Supper of our Lord*.

As for that of *Baptism*, it is the initiating Ordinance, by which we are admitted Members into *Christ*'s visible Church upon Earth; and, is plainly instituted for the Honour of the Redeemer's *Name*, as being appointed to be administrated, not only in the *Name of the Father and of the Holy Ghost*, but of the *Son* our Saviour. And as to the Influence this Ordinance of *Baptism* may have for maintaining the Honour of his *Name*, ye yourselves may judge, *which* hath the greatest Tendency this Way; *whether*, when according to the natural Intention of the Institution, it is in a decent publick Manner gone about in the solemn Assembly; *or*, when it is thrust into a private Room or Corner, where it is to be feared, that too often it is made to degenerate into a meer Custom, and empty Formality.

But then, as to the Sacrament of the *Supper*, this is yet in a more peculiar Manner instituted for the Honour of our Redeemer's *Name*. 'Tis the great *Memorial* of what he hath done and suffered for us, and to be continued, till he come again in order to *judge the*

World with Righteouſneſs (*a*). And truly there is ſomewhat ſo very remarkable in our Saviour's inſtituting of it; and the bleſſed Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 11 Chap. doth ſpeak out ſo many great and awful Things in Relation to it, and to the Manner of partaking at it; that it is really amazing, that any who pretends a Regard unto the *Chriſtian Name*, and alſo to the Doctrines of the *Reformation*, ſhould have been of late, at ſo much Pains, by writing, and in writing by ſeveral the moſt groſly ſtrained Conſtructions, upon ſome of the very plaineſt Paſſages of Scripture, to give unto the World, extremely diminutive Thoughts of this ſolemn and ſacred *Inſtitution*: As if, according to the old *Socinian* Doctrine, it were no more than an empty *Ceremony* or *Sign*, but not at all a *Seal* of the New and well ordered *Covenant*; and as if, *even* in this degenerate State, and earthly Diſpoſition of Mind which prevaileth among us, ſo vaſtly different from that which remarkably obtain'd among the primitive Chriſtians, there was no more Need of any previous Preparation in thinking to approach unto it, than in going about any the moſt ordinary Piece of Duty incumbent upon us. Sure, the Age we live in, is not of ſuch a Complexion, that any ſhould need either by Writing or Converſation to act ſuch a Part, as if there was Reaſon to fear, that People are much in Hazard of taking up

(*a*) *Pſal.* 96. 13.

up too much of their Time, or becoming too ſerious in the Matters of GOD, and the Concerns of *Religion*; or in preparing for that *Ordinance*, which, through the Bleſſing of GOD, might be of the greateſt Advantage unto them. And 'tis abundantly obvious, that every Attempt to depreciate any of the Inſtitutions of *Chriſt*, eſpecially this ſolemn, awful, and yet comfortable one of the Sacrament of the *Supper*, hath a native Tendency to the leſſening of the Honour of his *Name*, and conſequently to the weakning of the true Intereſts of *Religion*. But,

5thly, If ye would hold Hand to the Honour of the Redeemer's *Name*, and the propagating of his holy *Religion*, which is calculated ſo much to be a *Bleſſing* to the Children of Men; let me recommend it to you to contribute to it from Time to Time, even out of your *Subſtance*, as GOD is pleaſed to enable you: For,

1*ſt*, This is to *honour the LORD with your Subſtance* (a) in an eminent Degree.

2*dly*, Conſider how miſerable the Condition of theſe muſt be, who are Strangers unto CHRIST, and without the ſaving Knowledge of his *Name*. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of the unconverted *Heathen*, *Eph.* ii. 12. doth repreſent them as being *without CHRIST*, and in conſequence of this, as being *without GOD*, and *without Hope in the World*; and *Acts* iv. 12. We are told, *neither is there Salvation in any other* beſides CHRIST; *for there is none other Name*

(*a*) Prov. 3. 9.

under Heaven among Men whereby we muſt be ſaved.

3*dly*, Let the falſe and miſtaken *Zeal* of others in what is bad, be an Excitement unto you to exert yourſelves in what is ſo commendable and good. Shall bigotted and idolatrous Papiſts be ſo very induſtrious and expenſive, to propogate the *Romiſh Faith*, in their ſuperſtitious and idolatrous Doctrines? And, Shall we be unconcerned or ſlack-handed about propagating the truly *Chriſtian Faith* for the Salvation of the Souls of others?

4*thly*, Let the true and well-placed *Zeal* of not a few both in our neighbouring *Land*, and in our *own*, be an Excitement unto ſuch as have already done well, to hold on doing ſo; and unto others, that they may ſet Heart and Hand to concur with them in their pious Endeavours; and the rather, that theſe Endeavours have been already attended with much deſireable Succeſs. And indeed, as even we in this Place have a great Deal of Reaſon to be thankful to GOD, and to honour the Memory and the Perſons of ſeveral, on the account of their liberal *Foundations* and *Donations*, whereby Proviſion is made for the Support of the *Aged*, the Relief of the *Infirmed and Diſeaſed*, as alſo for the Maintenance, the virtuous and religious Education of conſiderable Numbers both of *Boys and of Girls*; ſo, I cannot but think it muſt be very agreeable to you, that the

State

State of the *Orphan-Hospital* among us, hath, in the Space even of three Years, made such considerable Advances; and that ye have now the Opportunity of observing with your Eyes so goodly a Sight of young Ones before you, so decently apparelled even by their own *Industry* to which they are trained, while particular Care is also taken as to their *Christian* and truly *religious Education*, by a Provision out of the Funds of *that truly honourable Society among us for propagating of Christian Knowledge*, whose Endeavours have been remarkably owned of GOD, in propagating of it, both into the remoter Places of our *native Country*, and likewise even into the *western World*; as to both of which, several in the neighbouring *Nation*, have not a little concurred, in a very generous and truly *Christian* Manner, both with their Substance and with their Counsels. And as it well becometh us in a special Manner, and with a suitable Gratitude to acknowledge, how much the good Designs of the *Society* have been furthered, by His *Majesty's liberal annual Donation* (a), for advancing the same Ends, which the *Society* hath in View; so the Successes which have attended the Endeavours of the *Society*, and do still

(a) *This refers to His Majesty's annual Bounty of* 1000 l. Ster. *for encouraging itinerant Preachers and Catechists in the* Highlands *and Islands of* Scotland, *under the Direction of the General Assembly of the Church of* Scotland.

ſtill attend them, notwithſtanding ſome Diſaſters and Inconveniencies, to which all humane Managements, even the beſt, are expoſed; and the great Numbers of their *Scholars*, amounting, according to the Account laid before the late General Aſſembly of this Church, to no leſs than betwixt *four and five Thouſand*; do ſpeak ſo much to the Honour of theſe *truly honourable and reſpectful Perſons*, that are Members and Managers in the *Society*, that I rejoice to have ſo good an Argument for ſuperſeding the Neceſſity of any ſuch particular *Encomiums*, as might perhaps be conſtructed to ſavour too much of Flattery, Affectation and Formality. So then,

5thly, Conſider how great a *Reward* all ſuch may expect of GOD, who with a truly ſincere and honeſt *Mind*, do concur with their *Subſtance* and otherwiſe, in promoting the Intereſts of his Son's *Name*, and of his holy *Religion*. If a *Cup of cold Water given to a Diſciple, in the Name of a Diſciple* (a), for the relieving of him in his bodily Neceſſities, ſhall not go unrewarded; how highly *rewarded* may we well ſuppoſe, theſe truly pious and liberal Souls ſhall be, who *deviſe and act liberal Things*, for the ſpiritual and eternal Benefit of the Souls of others? 'Tis a ſurpriſing *Word* of the bleſſed Apoſtle, and points out the truly marvelous Condeſcenſion of the Divine Goodneſs towards us, when he ſaith, *Heb.*

(a) Mat. 10. 42.

Heb. vi. 10. *GOD is not unrighteous, to forget your Work and Labour of Love.*

And now, there is but one Improvement more, which I would only, in a paſſing Manner touch upon in the fourth Place, as particularly relative to the laſt Clauſe in the Text; and it is this; Shall *all Nations* bleſs the *Name* of our Redeemer, and *call him bleſſed?* ſhall they in their thankful Acknowledgments celebrate the Praiſes due unto him? Let not us be wanting in this ſo ſuitable and pleaſant a Way, to make alſo our grateful Returns unto him. Let us be much in *bleſſing* him, and *bleſſing* his and our heavenly Father for him. Let us ſay with the holy Pſalmiſt in the two Verſes immediately following that of our Text, *Bleſſed be the LORD GOD, the GOD of Iſrael, who only doth wondrous Things: And bleſſed be his glorious Name for ever; and let the whole Earth be filled with his Glory.* The more we are accuſtomed to this Way of it upon *Earth*, which is ſo much the Work of *Heaven* above; the more ſhall we be fitted to employ ourſelves in it to Perfection *there*, when aſſociated to the *innumerable Company of Angels, and the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect* (a); and engaged with them, to our inexpreſſible Satisfaction, in ſinging *Halelujahs*, *unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever* (b).

The LORD bleſs what hath been delivered, and to his Name be the Praiſe for ever. *Amen.*

(*a*) Heb. 12. 22, 23. (*b*) Rev. 5. 13.

FINIS.